

a lot can happen in a year by caffeinescripts

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: F/M, basically important moments we never got or will get but we deserved, jonathan and nancy are just in love okay dont question this too much, kind of like those '5 times this happened' fics but not really, sorry this is rlly long too btw

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Summary:

She couldn't help it, her mind wandered to Jonathan. She kinda did that a lot now too. She really just couldn't help it, he was just always there for her.

...or how jonathan and nancy fell in love between 1983 and 1984 (the season 2 au we deserve).

a lot can happen in a year

Author's Note:

dedicated to the charlie to my natalia, my jancy sister: jackie (& geena, who knew about this surprise before jackie did). I love these two a lot.

an: this is my first time writing jancy, so i tried to make this as in character as possible. also these two are severely lacking fics so...set in between season 1 and 2, if that wasn't obvious.

i.

"Nance. Hey, Nance? You there?" Steve's voice jolted her, bringing her back down to reality. She did that a lot now: zone out. Think about...things. It just happened to happen a lot when she was around her boyfriend.

She felt a small surge of guilt. Steve really was a good guy. He forgave her after everything (not telling him about Jonathan, kind of forcing him to fight a monster from another world), apologized for everything. Taken her back. She was grateful, or she should be. She had liked him so much...what had changed?

She scoffed mentally. She had changed. She was the same Nancy that felt like a completely different person. Deep down (deep deep down), she didn't know why she had taken Steve back. Maybe it was because he was safe and comfortable, a stand up guy. Maybe it was because he was the first person she'd ever done...that with. Maybe it's because she could go back to dating him, and life could go back to normal. Like it never happened.

It hadn't been too long. Will was adjusted back comfortably, he and the rest of the boys back to their normal, happy selves. Mike was still

waiting for Eleven to come back though, she noticed him longingly looked at the basement door. She hoped she would, not just for her little brother's sake. Will seemed fine though, the ecstatic adorable little kid she used to only see when she was at the Byers' to pick up Mike. She could scoff again at how much things had changed.

She couldn't help it, her mind wandered to Jonathan. She kinda did that a lot now too. She really just couldn't help it, he was just always there for her. First, she was worried about him and Will. Then she realized that Jonathan kind of became her best friend. In a weird way, he filled the void of Barb better than Steve tried. She still couldn't help thinking about everything whenever she so much as looked at him. Her bad nights seemed to align with his for some reason, they always found each other at the others window knocking gently. It gave her a different kind of comfort than when Steve climbed up.

"Woah, you must be really bored." Steve teased again, pulling her out of her thoughts again. "I am too," He gestured to the textbook.

Nancy offered him a smile. "It's not that. I was just, thinking..."

"About what, Nance?"

She wavered a moment. A good girlfriend (an honest one) would tell Steve what was going through her mind. A good, honest, girlfriend would also tell Steve she snuck out to the Byers house when the nightmares got to be too much instead of his. "Nothing important." She smiled at him.

ii.

Nancy was just a little bit tipsy. It wasn't even a big deal, although she hadn't drank since the night Barb...whatever, she hadn't drank in a while. She deserved another beer, she told herself as she chugged accordingly. It wasn't even really a party, just a few dozen of Steve's friends. She idly wondered where hers were, until she remembered

she only hung out with two guys and her little brother (and that was only sometimes-She couldn't say no to him or Will when they begged her to play with them anymore).

She stumbled throughout the house, looking for her boyfriend. She told him before this thing she had to be home by curfew, but she doubted he even remembered. She was disappointed Jonathan wasn't there, she thought suddenly. She'd have a friend and a ride home.

"Have you-" Nancy slurred a bit, walking up to one of Steve's insufferable friends. "Have you seen Steve?" She mumbled out to the other drunk girl.

"Can't say that I have." She shrugged carelessly. "We have seen your weirdo friend lurking 'round here though."

Nancy's brow furrowed, anger surging up inside of her that she knew exactly who she was talking about. She was sick of this town shit talking the Byers. "Don't say that about him." Her voice was steadier, almost sounding sober.

"What, Nancy? Defensive over your secret boyfriend and his freak brother that came back from the dead?" She instigated.

"Take that back!" Nancy visibly angering, her louder voice starting to draw a few of the party goers attention.

"Or what?" She didn't back down either, straightening her stance.

Nancy's voice was progressively getting louder. "Take that back, now."

"Nancy? Nancy!" No one other than Jonathan Byers made his way over to her, looking them over. "What's going on? Come on," He tried to calm her down.

She let herself be gently pulled away from the girl, her eyes not leaving hers as she gently stumbled through the house until she was too far away. Only then did she let herself lean into Jonathan's side, and he took this as a sign it was okay to wrap his arm around her waist to help her walk.

“What’re you doing here?” Nancy slurred again, grateful for his presence. “How’d you know?”

Jonathan stammered for a moment. He didn’t want to tell her he’d seen her boyfriend out for a beer run (and somehow got an invite, not that Nancy hadn’t mentioned it before, but the two guys were cool now), way too drunk to even be driving. Plus he knew about her curfew. “Just had a feeling.”

She seemed amused by that as they neared his car, leaning against the side of it before he helped her into it. “Thank you,” It was a mumble as well, but it was sincere.

Jonathan just smiled as he got into his side of the car. “The real question here is what you were doing here?” He tried teasing her as he backed out. He was glad she was sober enough to form coherent answers, even if they were influenced by alcohol.

“I don’t know,” She laughed a bit. “Rebelling?” He smiled at that too, but Nancy kept going. “I don’t know. Just...trying to forget?” Her voice got softer, and more like a question, as she fumbled through her own thoughts.

Jonathan nodded sympathetically. He shouldn’t have brought it up, he scolded himself. However, he looked over to see the young girl curling into his passenger seat sleepily. “You’re never going to forget it, you know...” He said gently, earning a “hmpf” from her. “You are going to get through it though. You’re going to be okay Nance.”

He looked over once more to see her smiling, and he felt better about his comment. “You’re so good, Jonathan.” She yawned in between her words. “Sometimes, like now, I actually can admit I like you more than Steve...” And then she was out.

iii.

It happened a lot. She wasn’t sure how but one day she just started going over there to hang out. It was probably when she was dropping

Mike off, or maybe picking him up? Either way, she had been drug into Jonathan's room and hung out. And then they just...kept doing it. She liked it, she felt more at home in his room listening to music than her own.

"So, this is what you wanted me to hear?" She teased, sitting comfortably on his bed. Neither one of them mentioned the party, it was old news by now.

"Well, do you like it?" She nodded, bopping her head to the beat of the song gently. He seemed pleased as he made his way over to another set of records. As he pulled a vinyl out from the stack, the rest tumbled to the ground, causing Nancy to laugh out at his awkward mannerisms. They were all fine but she chuckled as she got off his bed and went to help him pick them up.

Her laughter caused him to chuckle as well as they picked up the record holders, inching closer to each other without realizing. They only did as they reached for the same one, their hands brushing together softly.

They both flushed, but neither one removed their hand from the others. They shared shy smiles, and Nancy gently flipped his hand over, tracing his matching scar of hers gently with her finger without even thinking about it. The moment lasted longer than it really should have, but both of them found themselves leaning towards each other. Closer and closer and...

"Hey Nancy!" Mike shouted down the hall, Will on his heels. The pair broke away like they were doused in freezing water. He appeared in the doorway a minute later, Will and the others behind him. "Mom said it was cool to stay the night so you don't have to wait around anymore," He explained like his sister hated being here or something.

"Oh," She nodded, her mind still on the almost moment she shared with Jonathan. "Okay. Thanks Mike." She smiled at her little brother, who was looking at her and Jonathan skeptically. He brushed it off though, turning back to his friends.

Nancy turned to face Jonathan, a look he couldn't quite read on her face. "I guess that's my cue."

"You don't have to go," Jonathan stammered. He did not want her feeling bad about what just happened. His nerves were calmed when she smiled at him as she grabbed her bag.

"It's okay, my mom probably wants me home anyway. I'll see you tomorrow, okay?" She touched his arm, letting him know it was all good.

"I'll walk you out,"

"Don't bother." She smiled again, grabbing her stack of records. "You need to reorganize these." She teased gently, placing the records in his hands. She hesitated again, before she quickly kissed his cheek, even more delicately than she had during Christmas time. Unlike then though, she turned on her heel and made her way out the door without even looking at Jonathan's (shocked) face, and wondering why she had just done that.

iv.

"You're lying."

"What're you talking about?" Nancy rolled her eyes at her younger brother, accusing her in her doorway. He made his way into the room, that determined look on his face

"Steve is still your boyfriend, right?" She nodded cautiously, trying to figure out Mike's angle. "So, you're lying to one of them." He stated like it was the simplest thing in the world.

"Mike. What are you talking about?"

Mike, annoyed that she couldn't just read his mind, explained. "You like Jonathan, but you're dating Steve. So, you're lying to him. Actually, you're lying to both of them."

For once, Nancy didn't have a smart comeback for her brother. She didn't have words. She was speechless. She should've known her

brother would be the first to call her on her bullshit. "I—"

"You lied to me also! You told me you didn't like Jonathan!"

"Mike!" Nancy got her brother's attention. A rebuttal about the time that he told her he didn't like Eleven was on the tip of her tongue, but stopped herself just in time. "What put the idea in your head that I like Jonathan?"

"I have eyes." She gave him a look. "What? I saw you two in his room that one time! You looked like you were going to kiss! And Will says you've been hanging out there all the time, and Jonathan's in your room way more than Steve ever was and—"

"Mike!" She cut him off. She took a deep breath. "Steve is my boyfriend."

"I can't figure out why," He muttered, getting another dirty look. "I'm serious! I know you like Jonathan!"

"I do not like Jonathan," She sounded so insincere she wouldn't have believed herself.

"Bullshit."

"Mike!" She scolded him, he didn't seem to care though. "It's...complicated."

"No, it's not! You're afraid, like everyone else! And you're lying! Lying about it to me, to Steve, to Jonathan, and worst of all, to yourself!" And with that her brother stormed out of her room, slamming the door behind him. She called after him but it was no use. She knew he was taking out his hurt over losing El on everyone, including himself, but she still couldn't shake off that everything he was saying was true.

She wasn't sure why she wasn't crying. She should be crying. Steve was certainly crying. She wasn't. A few spare tears rolled down her cheeks while she talked to him, but that was...it. She didn't feel heartbreak or devastation. She felt numb. She felt like she wanted to talk to Barb, but there was no way to do that. She wanted to talk to a friend.

She glanced over at her clock. 7:04 PM. She was going to call but she didn't want to interrupt their dinner. They were probably done by now, right? Her family normally was but had no way to confirm since she declined to her mother, telling her she wasn't hungry. Her mother, surprisingly, didn't push her. Plus, she was sure Will was over. So sure she'd bet money. So it probably wasn't a formal family dinner. She convinced herself it was okay as she dialed.

It rung a few moments. "Hello?" She finally heard, thankful it was his voice. She remembered the first time Ms. Byers had answered and she went as red as a tomato, hearing how thrilled she was just by her shouting to Jonathan the call was for him.

"Hey," She didn't sound like she normally did.

"Hey, Nancy, uh, What's up?" He was worried. It made her heart clench.

She was quiet a moment, twirling her phone cord around in her lap. "I don't really know why I called," She started. "I just wanted to talk..." She trailed off.

Jonathan lowered his voice, a signal to her his mom was around. "Want me to come over later?" She nodded, even though he couldn't see her.

"Yeah, yeah." She said after a moment, remembering that he couldn't. "I'd like that."

"Okay." She could picture him nodding as well. "I have to go but I'll, uh, see you soon then." He said quietly. Nancy nodded, not bothering to reply when the line clicked.

She waited, criss crossed on her bed. She tried to do 'break up things'

she imagined she'd do with Barb. However, a half melted bowl of ice cream sat on her desk and frustration that all of her nail polishes disappeared was all that amounted from it. None of it made her feel *better* (did she really feel that bad to begin with?).

Sure, she liked Steve. Liked him enough to stay with him for a year, but the relationship wasn't what she wanted. She didn't feel butterflies around him, she hardly felt anything. As their future crept closer and closer, she realized she didn't want to move in with him one day, marry him. She wasn't in love. And that hit her harder than the breakup did.

A tapping at her window pulled her out of her thoughts, and she jumped up from her bed to let Jonathan in.

"Hey." He greeted her after he got in, both of them standing awkwardly in the center of her room.

"Hey," She said back just as quietly. The silence lingered until it was agonizing to Nancy, despite it only being a few moments. "I broke up with Steve." She blurted out.

"Oh," Jonathan looked like a mixture of shock and confusion. He looked like he was weighing what to say. He didn't really know how she was feeling, why she asked him here. "Are you okay?" He finally decided.

She nodded, moving back over to her bed. "Yeah, yeah." He followed her, but hadn't sat down yet. She wringed her hands together, thinking about what she could say to justify him coming over. "I'm not sad," She said simply.

Jonathan nodded again. "I'm sorry about that. Even if..." He trailed off, but Nancy understood. She gently patted the spot next to her, and Jonathan took it as permission to come over. He sat down next to her tentatively.

"It's okay," She mumbled, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear. "I just...I just wanted to talk to someone." She took a pause. "To you."

"Why?" Jonathan whispered without thinking about it.

Nancy shrugged, gently running a finger along her scar. Her eyes went to his hand with the pink slash through it. "I don't know. You just," She pressed her lips together. "I just wanted you here." She finally said, her hand grabbing Jonathan's with the matching scar.

Jonathan nodded, letting her trace his scar with her finger. "Well, uh, I'm here for you Nancy. Whenever." He said quietly, bringing a smile to her lips. She gently threaded their fingers together, their matching scars lining up along both of their hands.

"You're gonna stay, right?" She whispered sleepily, several hours later. Jonathan nodded, settling himself on "his" side of the bed. The difference between this and the times before, not only were their hands were still locked together but Nancy was snuggled up against him.

vi.

"You know, you have to tell him."

Nancy shrugged.

"You do!" Mike said insistently. "If you don't, it's literally the end of the world."

She arched an eyebrow. "Oh, yeah? How?"

Mike looked at her in disbelief. "What do you mean how?! He'll move away, fall in love with some other girl and never think about you again!"

Nancy's head ducked instantly, looking down at hands. "Mike,"

"You know it's true Nancy!" Mike argued. "So. When are you going to tell him? How are you going to do it?"

Nancy stammered for a second. "I-I don't know." She shrugged. "I don't even know how he feels."

“You’re kidding right? ‘Cause I know you’re smart Nancy. Way too smart to pretend you have no idea that Jonathan is in love with you!”

“Shut up!” She shot at him, regretting telling her brother anything. He was kinda all she had, besides Jonathan, and it’s not like she could talk to Jonathan about this. These...feelings. So, she confessed to her baby brother the feelings she still wasn’t 100% she had (Mike was 100% sure though).

“You know it’s true!”

“You ” Nancy got up now, shoving him out of her room. “don’t know what you’re talking about.” She stopped in the threshold, eyeing him.

“You can’t hide from your feelings forever!” Mike sassed her, heading towards the stairs on his own while she closed the door. She turned back into her room, hellbent on getting ready before Jonathan got there. She padded down the stairs 30 minutes later, seeing Jonathan in the doorway with Mike greeting him.

“Hey.” She grinned. She had broken up with Steve (and spent the night with Jonathan. *Platonically.*) weeks ago. They were way better now, and had been since they were hanging out more and more often.

“Hey.” He smiled back just as wide.

Mike cleared his throat. “Get a room.” He grumbled, giving Nancy a look. She ignored it.

“You ready?” Jonathan asked, hands in his pockets. She nodded, grabbing her coat before they headed out to his car. “Where to?” He asked as they sat in the car, Nancy in the passenger side with her eyebrows quirked.

“Anywhere.” She smiled, Jonathan starting up his car.

They ended up at the movies. She arched an eyebrow at him, Jonathan shrugged. “You said anywhere? We can go somewhere else...if you want.” Jonathan stammered, not wanting to make her do anything she didn’t want to.

Nancy shook her head, grabbing her coat as she hopped out of the car. She walked up to entrance, looking up at it. She remembered when Steve called her a slut on this board. She chewed on her lip as she recounted how profusely he apologized for it, but he still let it happen. She remembered how Jonathan beat the shit out of Steve for it.

“Was this a bad place? I’m sorry, I didn’t think-” Nancy grabbed his hand, cutting him off.

“It’s fine.” She smiled, pulling him to the ticket booth. They purchased their tickets (Nothing scary. They had a silent agreement that their real life was scary enough) and popcorn and spent the next few hours being engrossed in the fictional universe. Halfway through the movie, Nancy’s hand found Jonathans. Hesitantly, in the testing-the-waters kind of way, she grabbed it. A smile broke out on her face when he interlocked his fingers with hers, not letting go the whole rest of the time.

It was dark when they got out, they discarded their popcorn but remained connected through their hands as they walked out towards the parking lot.

“That was...fun.” Nancy nodded, not wanting to go home quite yet. Jonathan nodded, as Nancy pulled them past the parking lot and down the sidewalk of the small town center. Hawkins wasn’t that big, but it had the street they could walk down that was lit by streetlights. Jonathan arched an eyebrow and Nancy shrugged. “Thought we could take a walk?” She proposed it as a question, as if he would say no.

“Good with me.” they walked in comfortable silence for a few minutes, nearing the edge of town. If they kept walking they’d reach the woods. The woods where Nancy got taken (the woods Nancy could never forget).

“Jonathan.” Nancy stopped, turning to face him. She had to tell him, tell him something, she just wasn’t sure how to.

“Yeah?” He looked at her, that ‘Nancy’ look he gave her a lot (really just giant doe eyes).

Nancy licked her lips, casting her eyes down. “I-” She was illuminated under the street light, a warm glow around her. Jonathan couldn’t help staring at her. “What?” She smiled shyly at him.

“Huh?” Jonathan was shaken out of his thoughts.

“You were staring.” Nancy laughed, bringing her hands up to her face. “Do I have an eyelash or something?”

“No, no.” Jonathan grabbed both of her hands now, wiping the smile off her face, she moment turning serious now. “You...you’re just beautiful.”

Nancy stared at him, her eyes reading his. She’d never seen anyone speak so sincerely before, especially to her. She suddenly knew, she was one hundred percent. Before she could even process her actions, she pushed herself up on her tiptoes and gently pressed her lips to his. Jonathan was taken aback for a moment, stunned that Nancy Wheeler was under the streetlight at dusk, looking gorgeous, kissing him. He only let his thoughts linger for a second before kissing her back.

It was sweet. It wasn’t overly dramatic or life changing like the movies. It didn’t need to be all that. It was tender and soft and the best kiss she ever had. And Nancy Wheeler knew right then and there; she was in love.

Jonathan pulled back first, his eyes looking down at her. Wondering what the hell she was thinking. “Jonathan, I-” She looked back down at their still intertwined hands. “I like you. I really like you.” She couldn’t even process the word ‘love’ right now. There would be more time for love and moving in together and weddings. Now was just now, it was simple and theirs.

“I feel the same way Nancy.” Jonathan replied, not giving her a chance to respond before kissing her again. The entire town, the entire world, melted away. Neither one was really sure how long they stayed there, it didn’t really matter. Nothing else really mattered in this moment.

Nancy lounged on Jonathan's bed, a textbook in her lap. Her legs draped over Jonathans. Nancy looked up to see her boyfriend dozing off, prompting her to poke him with the end of her pencil.

"Hey," He grumbled.

"Hey yourself." She said sternly. "This is important."

"This is unbearable." Nancy rolled her eyes.

"This," She pressed her pencil against his homework. "is how we get into college."

Jonathan laughed, causing Nancy too as well. They decided to take a break (More like Jonathan convinced her. Not like it was easy to say no to him. Especially when they were allowed to kiss each other whenever they wanted). They broke apart from being a tangle of limbs and kisses when they heard a voice carry down the hall.

"Hey, Jonathan?" Will called as the couple broke apart. He was in the doorway within the minute. "Oh, hey Nancy." He wasn't surprised she was there, she always was.

"Yeah buddy?" Jonathan asked, Nancy just smiled.

"I'm going over to Dustins!" He exclaimed. Nancy remembered somewhere in the back of her head Mike mentioning that D&D was now at Dustin's this weekend.

"Okay, be careful!" Jonathan warned his brother who grinned at him.

"Don't worry, I will! Lucas is gonna come over to come with me because of-" Will stopped abruptly, as if he spilled a secret he shouldn't have.

"Because of what?" Jonathan prompted, Nancy raising her eyebrows at the younger boy.

“Nothing,” Will stammered. He got nothing but two looks from the teenagers. “Fine, uh, something happened at the arcade.”

“What happened?” Nancy asked this time, worried.

“I just. I did this thing where I zoned out and didn’t know where I was, but I promise I’m fine now!” Will swore. The couple gave him uneasy looks. “Please let me go to Dustins tonight! I promise I’m okay.” Will begged, looking at Nancy with pleading eyes now.

Nancy looked over at Jonathan, “Mike’s coming over too.” She said gently to an undecided Jonathan. She felt so bad for Will, not only did the kid live in the Upside Down for months but now he had to deal with the aftermath of it. The kid deserved a fun weekend with his friends.

Jonathan seemed to feel the same way because he nodded begrudgingly. “Just wait until Mike and Dustin come over before you leave, okay?” Will grinned, running over to hug his brother. Nancy smiled at what a sweet kid he was, especially when he gave her a quick one too before exiting the room.

It was silent for a few moments. “You okay?” Nancy asked gently, looking over at her concerned boyfriend.

“It’s, uh, something’s going on.” Jonathan started, his hand holding Nancy’s now.

She cocked her head to the side. “Maybe it’s PTSD or something?” she suggested gently, referring to Will. “From personal experience, I know going to...that place...changes you. And I was only there for a few minutes. Will was-” She stopped when she saw his expression change. She bent herself down to his eye level, forcing him to look at her. “Maybe he just needs a little more time.” She said gently.

“No, no. It’s different than that.” Jonathan started. “Something changed. He won’t tell us.”

“Think he told Mike?” Nancy wondered. Her little brother would tell her (someone, anyone) if he knew something was seriously wrong with Will.

"I don't think so," Jonathan shrugged. "He's trying to deal with it alone. He doesn't want to be a burden." Nancy sighed. She saw so much of his brother in him.

"Why don't you talk to him?" Nancy said slowly. She sighed. When she talked to Mike about the whole Eleven thing, it really helped. Now they were close again. "Really, really talk to him?"

"I'm not sure if he'll tell me."

"He will." She nodded to him, "I know it."

"What if-" Jonathan started, a look Nancy recognized all too well in his eyes. His voice cracked. "What if something happens again? What if that, that-thing, that place, what if it all comes back?" Jonathan turned away, it being too much to handle.

Nancy saddened. The last thing in the entire world she wanted was for the last year to resurface. She had finally moved on, Mike was doing better, they were back to their lives, they all had moved on. But, if something was going on with Will, then...

She put her hand on his arm, gently forcing him to face her. "Then." She looked him dead in the eyes. "Then we'll get through it. Together." She stated forcefully.

Jonathan nodded, seeing how honest she was being just by looking in her eyes. She pressed her lips to her boyfriends gently. And Jonathan believed her.